



Queensland University of Technology
Brisbane Australia

This is the author's version of a work that was submitted/accepted for publication in the following source:

Wilson, Chris K., [Hutchinson, Jonathon](#), & [Shea, Pip](#) (2010) Public service broadcasting, creative industries and innovation infrastructure : the case of ABC's Pool. *Australian Journal of Communication*, 37(3), pp. 15-32.

This file was downloaded from: <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/41628/>

© Copyright 2010 the authors.

Notice: *Changes introduced as a result of publishing processes such as copy-editing and formatting may not be reflected in this document. For a definitive version of this work, please refer to the published source:*

Public Service Broadcasting, Creative Industries and Innovation Infrastructure: The Case of ABC's *Pool*

Chris K Wilson, PhD Student, Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology

Jonathon Hutchinson, PhD Student, Queensland University of Technology

Pip Shea, PhD Student, Queensland University of Technology

Abstract

The proliferation of media services enabled by digital technologies poses a serious challenge to public service broadcasting rationales based on media scarcity. Looking to the past and future, we articulate an important role that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) might play in the digital age. We argue that historically the ABC has acted beyond its institutional broadcasting remit to facilitate cultural development and, drawing on the example of *Pool* (an online community of creative practitioners established and maintained by the ABC), point to a key role it might play in fostering network innovation in what are now conceptualised as the creative industries.

Introduction

In 2008 the Federal Government's Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy initiated a public review of the role, function and objectives of Australia's national broadcasters (DBCDE, 2008). Since the inception of public service broadcasting (PSB) in Australia in the 1930s problematising and investigating its utility has repeatedly arisen as both public pastime and political priority. The trigger for the 2008 inquiry, as expressed by the Minister, was the recognition that 'new digital technologies are radically changing the fundamentals of broadcasting and media' presenting challenges and opportunities which the national broadcasters must face (DBCDE, 2008, p.1). These were fundamental challenges given the traditional reliance of public service broadcasting on a rationale of media scarcity. The ABC's Managing Director Mark Scott poses the question 'In a digital age of plenty, what role can the public broadcaster play?' (Scott, 2009).

The Federal Government, the ABC and recent scholarship has centered the response to this question on two strategies (see DebreTT, 2010). The first draws on the deployment of new media platforms to enhance the delivery of content to audiences; content that accords with an existing social and political remit, and especially that which fails to find a home in the market. The second strategy suggested to shore up national broadcasting is the use of digital technologies to engage with audiences in new ways. Metaphors of the 'town square' and 'virtual village square' are employed to describe how public sector broadcasters might enhance the public sphere by drawing the audience into conversation. This is certainly evident in a recent ABC marketing strategy that depicts people 'inside' the ABC logo accompanied by the tag line 'Enter_the Conversation' (ABC – Enter the Conversation, <http://www.abc.net.au/corp/enter/>, accessed 10 October, 2010).

We wish to present a third, less apparent, strategic direction that draws on a long tradition in which the ABC has acted to facilitate cultural development beyond broadcasting. Conceptually, this draws on an understanding of the ABC as both cultural institution in its own right and a piece of Australia's cultural infrastructure engaged within the national innovation system. Cunningham (1992, p.4) employs the term cultural infrastructure to capture 'the sense of the integration of policy, institutions and industrial practices as they together provide mechanisms for defining, justifying and delivering culture to audiences'. We employ it to describe the ABC as an ensemble of resources (technical and otherwise) that might be made available to support cultural production beyond its institutional boundaries. That is, it may be engaged to facilitate cultural activity that is not directly related to its role of producing or procuring content for broadcast. Generally, the focus of such facilitation has been on increasing local creative capacity through the identification, harnessing and fostering of creative human capital – it has been innovative rather than merely productive.

Our contention is that the ABC remains an important piece of cultural infrastructure that might be drawn upon to facilitate innovation in what have now been reconceptualised as the creative industries. This is despite emerging intellectual and policy approaches that privilege the network over the institution as the primary locale of innovation. Networks are unquestionably important, but the tendency has been to overstate the uncoordinated nature of the on- and off-line relations that constitute them, and therefore to obscure the role institutions play in their facilitation.

In the first section of the paper we explore the rationales and mechanisms that established and encouraged the national broadcaster to take on the role of cultural development infrastructure, before briefly describing some of the

uses to which this infrastructure has been put. We conclude the section with a discussion of the role state-based institutions might play in a national innovation system that is moving to privilege network activity.

The second section of the paper describes the case of *Pool*, an online community of creative practitioners generated, managed and, to some extent, resourced by the ABC. *Pool*, we argue, is an example of how centralised bodies like the ABC may be called upon to provide the infrastructure for networked innovation – to broker the formation and maintenance of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). We conclude the paper by outlining some possible futures for *Pool* and public service broadcasters in a networked, digital era.

Beyond Broadcasting - ABC as Cultural Infrastructure

When broadcasting began in Australia in 1923 it did so as a decidedly commercial affair despite expectations of the role this new communication technology would play in the social, cultural and economic development of the nation. The power of broadcasting was thought to lay not only in its potential to aggregate a dispersed audience, but to form a pervasive presence - since its consumption is said to be 'less by direct selection of specific, separable items than is the case with media that depend on payment for the delivery of each service' (Cunningham, 2006, pp. 47-48). This power, combined with the requirement for broadcasters to make use of electromagnetic spectrum, a scarce public resource, provided the government a strong argument for regulatory control - a control initially exercised under the Wireless Telegraphy Act (1905).

By the late 1920s the Federal government realised that the market alone, regardless of its regulation, would not produce the national benefits of which radio was deemed capable. Essentially, the very place where this new form of communication might be thought to have most impact - the vast and socially isolating spaces of rural Australia - were commercially unattractive. It was this impasse that gave birth to an Australian national broadcasting system (Davis, 1988, p.19).

In 1929 the Federal Government acquired a number of the existing commercial stations and established new regional stations to form a 'national' network. Content for the network was to be provided by a private contractor, the tender for which was won by the Australian Broadcasting Company. The Company, established for the purpose by theatre proprietor Benjamin Fuller, cinema proprietor Stuart Doyle and music publisher Frank Albert, exemplifies the conception of broadcast institutions as an ensemble of varied cultural resources and expertise (Inglis, 2006, p.12).

The programming contract issued to the Company by the Postmaster General's Department (PMG) represents the government's first codification of specific broadcast content imperatives. Taking the recently penned BBC Charter as a lead, the contract established requirements with regards to content diversity and quality. It emphasised the role of the national broadcaster in the provision of items that 'elevate the mind', reflecting a 'high arts' approach to culture, drawing from civic humanism the notion that the arts are a 'humanising and civilising influence over the populace' (PMG, 1931 cited in BTCE, 1991, p.12; Hartley & Cunningham, 2002, p.18). The contract also set out the first broadcast prescriptions regarding the relation between broadcasters and content producers, recognising that local cultural activity might be enhanced through the broadcasting process but also well as through the cultural infrastructure formed by broadcast institutions. Local cultural development was considered in quantitative terms of sectoral/employment expansion and, reflecting the 'high arts' content clause, also related it to improvements in the aesthetic and technical quality of local artistic endeavours.

The contract contained two production clauses. The first required the company to '...so far as practicable, encourage local talent by utilizing the services of persons who may possess attributes rendering them suitable for providing broadcasting items' (PMG, 1931 cited in BTCE, 1991). Second, the company should pursue a 'reasonable policy in inducing the establishment and maintenance of organisations devoting their talent to the rendering of high-class compositions' (PMG, 1931 cited in BTCE, 1991). These two requirements, with subtle yet important revisions, would find their place in the Australian Broadcasting Commission Act (1932), the legislation that took programming of the national stations out of private hands and created the ABC as a government statutory instrumentality for the purpose.

As per the first of the company requirements, the idea that the broadcasting process itself could directly stimulate local cultural employment was clearly established by Section 23 of the ABC Act. It required the broadcaster to, 'as far as possible, give encouragement to the development of local talent *and* endeavour to obviate restriction of the utilization of the services of persons who, in the opinion of the Commission, are competent to make useful contributions to broadcasting programmes' (ABC Act 1932, S23, *our italics*). The ABC pursued the employment directive enthusiastically reporting that in its very first year of operation it had utilised the services of some 17,000 local singers and musicians (Inglis, 2006, p.27). This requirement would be extended to commercial broadcasters with the introduction of the Australian Broadcasting Act in (1942). In fact, a second 'local content' requirement

was also introduced in the 1942 Act. It stipulated that both the national and commercial stations play a minimum quota of music composed by Australians, a recognition that, in addition to directly supporting the employment of local artists, broadcasting could stimulate demand for cultural products in secondary markets (Counihan, 1992). Essentially, the broadcasting of music led to increased record sales and so could improve the lot of local composers.

Importantly, Section 23 of the Act revised the contractual requirement by separating the encouragement of the development of local talent from merely utilizing it in the broadcasting process (achieved through the simple addition of the word *and*). In considering the enthusiasm with which the Commission assembled and devoted resources to this task one should be aware that the ABC was Australia's first national cultural institution and would remain the only 'general' national arts body until the formation of the Australian Council for the Arts more than three decades later (Parliamentary Research Service, 1994). The ABC took seriously its role in discovering and establishing the professional careers of local artists. In its representations to the 1942 Joint Committee on Wireless Broadcasting, the ABC emphasised its extensive search for local artistic talent. It had 'held many thousands of auditions to test orchestral and other artists, and many engagements...resulted' (PCA, 1942, p.47). At this time the ABC could report that it had developed an expert musical staff, easily supplemented by local and overseas experts, which it could utilise in the audition process (PCA, 1942, pp.46-47). In addition, the ABC's artistic expertise could be turned to the examination of compositions and manuscripts submitted to the organisation by local artists. This process was further supported by using the ABC's financial and technical resources to produce and perform worthy pieces and to provide cash prizes to local artists. For example, in 1939-40 the Commission examined 450 local compositions, judging 92 worthy of performance and producing 27 of them (PCA, 1942, p.49).

Section 24 of the Act, which required the ABC to establish and utilize 'groups of musicians for the rendition of orchestral, choral and band music of high quality', more explicitly recognised that the ensemble of resources that made up broadcast institutions could be utilised in broader cultural development (ABC Act 1932, S24). Yet it should be noted that it was only the ABC that was responsibilised by government to make such a contribution (unlike the Section 23 directive commercial broadcasters were not asked to undertake this task when broadcast legislation was revised in 1942). While the bands were an important source of broadcast material, the manner in which the ABC set about establishing and promoting high quality musical groups should preclude us from viewing the exercise as mere pragmatism. At the ABC's establishment in 1932, the first Chairman of the Commission, Charles Lloyd Jones, spoke of 'an Australian National Orchestra as a dream that the commission hoped to accomplish' (Inglis, 2006, p.28). Although it took a more decentralised approach by forming permanent concert orchestras and choruses in each of Australia's state capitals, the Gibson Inquiry noted that, 'with the object of raising the standard of performance in all things musical throughout Australia, the Commission has, where practicable, made available the resources of the whole organization to each State' (PCA, 1942, p.47). This included the provision of 'instruction, advice and the purchase of the required music' (PCA, 1942, p.47). Combined with expenditure on forming and maintaining dance and military bands, more than 20% of the Commissions total programming budget was spent on musical groups (PCA, 1942, p.18).

Sections 23 and 24 of the ABC Act (1932) and the manner in which the Commission enthusiastically pursued them cemented the role of the national broadcaster as an important piece of cultural infrastructure. Through the course of its history, the ABC has itself initiated, or been called into action by the federal government to engage in, the development of cultural activities that lie beyond its core remit as a broadcast institution. It has proven flexible enough to respond to, and experiment with, new cultural technologies and reframed cultural values.

In the 1970s when the Whitlam government sought to expand media and cultural opportunities, including greater community cultural involvement, it was the ABC that experimented with public access television - enabling community and cultural groups to use its resources to create and broadcast programs (Inglis, 2006, p.357). Although controversial, it was the ABC that was called upon by the federal government to experiment with community radio. Similar to the television experiment, the ABC provided the administrative and technical resources to facilitate production of community programming for the station 3ZZ (Dugdale, 1979; Harding, 1979). Such activities do not simply reflect new mechanisms to engage with audiences but, as with the *Pool* example to be outlined in Section 2 of this paper, stimulate new forms of cultural activity.

The ABC has also proven capable of refocusing its cultural innovation efforts in line with broader shifts in cultural values and cultural policy. In the past three decades this has meant responding to the movement away from a 'High Arts Policy' model which had taken a conservative and rather narrow view of culture and cultural value and towards a cultural and creative industries approach in which popular and, indeed commercial, activities have been re-evaluated (Turner, 2001). In the field of popular music, for example, the ABC has proven to be a particularly important piece of cultural infrastructure. In the mid 1970s it established Australia's first 24 hour rock station, 2JJ, which would expand to form the Triple J national network during the 1990s (Davis, 1988; Andrews, 1992). Triple J supports local popular music activities in a number of ways that extend beyond broadcasting. For instance, much

like the talent discovery process of the ABC's early years, it operates the *Unearthed* initiative to identify talented pop bands and musicians that are then assisted through the provision of recording, performance and promotion opportunities (ABC - Unearthed Website, <http://www.triplejunearthed.com>, accessed 10 October, 2010). The important role that the ABC has played in the development of the Australian popular music industry over the past thirty years has been widely acknowledged by government, the music industry and scholars (Agardy 1985; ABT, 1986; Breen, 1999).

The question is whether the ABC can remain effective at facilitating cultural innovation and indeed whether it can continue to itself provide broadcasting services that are 'innovative', 'comprehensive', and 'of a high standard'? (ABC Act - Charter 6, 1983). The challenge laid down by recent scholarship and policy directives relating to innovation systems in Australia, as elsewhere, suggests that the role of centralized, state-based research and development in fostering innovation may be diminishing (Cutler and Co., 2008; Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). Innovation in the first decades of the 21st Century, it is suggested, 'is more open and pervasive, characterised by skill in collaborating and making connections so that knowledge flows and grows, and so becomes available to meet customer and community needs' (Cutler and Co., 2008, p.4). The development of digital technologies, in particular the internet and Web 2.0 interactive capabilities, is regularly pointed to as typical of this network formulation (Benkler, 2006). These developments have certainly laid down a challenge to more centralised innovation, production and even civic and social processes, but there has been a tendency to overstate the adhoc and uncoordinated aspects of network relations (Strahilevitz, 2006).

The socio-technical implications of networked cultures triggers discourse around new forms of governance and the agency inherent in technology itself: the hardware and software facilitating network activity (Latour, 2005; Manovich, 2008). Ideas of 'Openness' are also of interest to scholars (see Castells, 1996; Benkler, 2006; Lessig 2008) as the shifts being enabled by digital networks are partly due to the 'rewriting' opportunities they afford. This involves creators allowing the reinterpretation and reuse of the artifacts they produce. Articulations of "Openness" encompass the scalability of software and end use devices; the adhoc nature and mobility of infrastructure; the spontaneity and cooperation of equipment; and having autonomy within networks. These factors all manifest in different ways in different contexts. This spectrum of "Openness" should be considered when imagining approaches to networked innovation: the idea that different networked contexts call for different levels of organization and intervention.

In the creative industries, the innovation policy challenge as we see it is not simply answered by government providing enabling technological infrastructure, such as the National Broadband Network (Barry, 2001). Collaborative networks do not spawn magically, but require a set of underlying resources that incentivise engagement. Networks need to be managed, perhaps as Rossiter (2006) has suggested, as a 'new institutional form'.

In the next section of the paper we will show how the ABC, utilizing an existing ensemble of resources, has begun to experiment in organizing networks for creative collaboration and innovation. The initiative we describe is an example of the important role centralized institutions might play in fostering innovation in a network environment.

ABC Pool – Network Innovation In Action

Towards the end of 2002 a member of the ABC's Radio Arts Unit who was conducting research into the opportunities the internet might offer broadcasters initiated an experiment in collaborative online creative production that would come to be known as *Pool*. Without sufficient resources to develop the project independently, and in accordance with *Pool*'s collaborative aims, the ABC formed a partnership with the University of Technology Sydney who provided a small financial contribution and a part-time web developer. The initiative remained under resourced for a number of years. While an online network infrastructure was maintained the mechanisms through which participation would be fostered did not really begin to take its current shape until 2006. By 2008 sufficient momentum had gathered within the ABC around the use of digital technologies to enable the formation of a Multiplatform and Content Development Division into which *Pool* was integrated. Despite an increase in institutional support, *Pool* remained committed to engaging in external relationships – at this time with Queensland University of Technology and the Australasian Cooperative Research Centre for Interaction Design (ACID).

Pool now describes itself as 'a social media space that brings together ABC professionals and audiences in an open-ended process of participation, co-creation and collaboration' (ABC – Pool, <http://www.pool.org.au>, accessed 10 October, 2010). The differentiation between ABC professionals and the 'audience' perhaps brings to mind a misleading impression that *Pool* is a new space of largely unidirectional content flows or that where interactivity occurs it is driven by the 'village voice' idea that audiences should engage in a conversation with the broadcaster. A better way of thinking of the initiative is as an online network space for facilitating interactions and collaborative production activities of a community of creative practitioners. The mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared

repertoires (discourse and action) that defines the community pertain to the techniques and aesthetic value of creative output. Membership of the community of practice is defined not by skill level or institutional affiliation, but a commitment to such techniques and values (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). This distinction is useful since *Pool* attracts a diverse array of users, including those engaged as media professionals (including, but not limited to those from the ABC), tertiary, secondary, and primary school students, as well as amateur artists, all of which are joined through a common concern (however small, or new) with creative production.

The ABC's *Pool* acts as a network facilitator, supporting interaction and collaboration within this creative producer community, not only through the provision of a technological infrastructure - a network architecture, but by drawing on a range of ABC resources.

What follows is an attempt to describe these resources and how they are deployed in the *Pool* initiative. They include the provision of a managed online space for storing and publishing content as well as engaging in creative discourse, online tools and educational support and links, information and encouragement of the creative commons intellectual property licensing regime, access to ABC archival material for reuse and remix, feedback from expert creative practitioners, an association with the reputable ABC brand and potential to access the broadcast audience.

ABC Resources as Network Infrastructure

Pool's online space is managed to enable, encourage and foster collaborative activity (Bacon, 2009). The basic software infrastructure, built using the Drupal open source content management system, is set up to ensure open yet secure access. Users sign up, agree to terms and conditions and must login to access the site. A unique *Pool* username and login provides a secure space for community members to publish their work, and enables *Pool* users to manage their own space. The ability to 'selfmanage' allows users to determine where their content is and is not visible within the site, and more broadly visible within the ABC. Users are free to make contact with each other and to comment on the work of others – but without anonymity.

Apart from the technical architecture of the site, *Pool* engages the expertise of a community management team to help direct online activity. John Banks (2002) notes that the community manager operates between the management team and the participants of the online community employing strategies to enable the community to develop their productive practices. An example of this 'enabling' strategy is the Poolcast project.

The Poolcast project is an ongoing initiative in which members are invited to produce a remixed podcast made entirely from the content of other *Pool* members. The Poolcast may then be distributed to a wider audience through an RSS feed, including the ABC's Radio National. Already one Poolcast production has gained exposure through the Radio National program *Sound Quality*. Although Poolcast was an idea initially generated by members of the community, it did not emerge in practice until the *Pool* community management team became involved in the production process. By providing a model of the creative process the *Pool* team motivated action from within the community that was further facilitated through the provision of source material and podcasting tools, including links to external Open Source production software.

The Poolcast was also made possible by the availability of content on the Pool site that was licensed under a creative commons intellectual property regime that enabled reuse and remixing. Recent inquiries into innovation systems have focused attention on the limited and restrictive nature of intellectual property licensing regimes and the negative impact these have on the development of open and collaborative innovation processes. The trick, with intellectual property according to the Cutler and Company report (2008, p.56) 'is to get the balance right: too little protection will discourage people from innovating because the returns are uncertain; too much protection may discourage people from innovating because the pathways to discovery are blocked by other intellectual property owners'. The ABC's *Pool* is leading the way by encouraging creative content producers to adopt the somewhat new Creative Commons licensing approach.

Creative Commons provides a 'tool (to) give everyone from individual creators to large companies and institutions a simple, standardized way to grant copyright permissions to their creative work' (Creative Commons Australia, 2010). Importantly, it gives producers the option (and an understanding) of allocating the level of copyright they wish to attach to their published content. This scale of copyright slides from All Right Reserved to the Public Domain. The most common license being used in *Pool* is 3.0 Unported Attribution (BY), Non-Commercial (NC). This allows users to share (copy, distribute and transmit) and to remix (adapt) creative works on condition that the work is not used for commercial purposes and that attribution is made in the manner specified by the author or licensor (Creative Commons Australia, 2010).

In an important show of faith in the Creative Commons system the ABC is also shifting its policy and approach to its archival collections and beginning to release material under this licensing regime. There are over 80 years worth

of archival material suitable for release and *Pool* is situated as the most suitable networked platform for releasing this material under Creative Commons licensing. This accords well with the report made by Cutler and Company to the Federal Government prior to the release of the 2009 Innovation White Paper which suggests 'to the maximum extent practicable, information, research and content funded by Australian governments – including national collections – should be made freely available over the internet as part of the global public commons' (Cutler and Co., 2008, p.57). The ABC archival material released through *Pool* is, of course, a substantial resource for the creative community to access, reuse and remix.

Collaborative creative innovation is also fostered in the *Pool* initiative through the provision of access to ABC media expertise. *Pool* is directed by three experienced radio producers who provide expert knowledge on media production and cultural expertise for *Pool* participants. Additionally, the *Pool* team has access to other ABC professionals and cultural experts from across the ABC. Feedback might be provided incidentally by ABC professionals who are *Pool* members or occur in more structured ways as facilitated by the community management team. An example of a more structured feedback event was the *City Nights* project. Here, community members were invited to submit audio content on which they were offered expert feedback from in-house ABC producers. Several contributions were selected for broadcast as part of the Radio National 360 documentaries program. Following a recent review ABC *Pool* also intends to offer opportunities to members to enter more involved co-creation processes with ABC experts (Foley, Yuille et al, 2009). John Banks and Jean Burgess describe co-creation as a way that users 'collectively contribute to the social, cultural and economic value of... media products... and likewise, it indicates the ways in which platform providers (however imperfectly) integrate user-participation into their own models of production' (Burgess and Banks, 2010, p.298). The co-creation of material for broadcast is a substantial incentive for members of the *Pool* community to contribute content. The attraction of addressing a seemingly unreachable audience made possible through broadcast, and by attaching the respected ABC brand, emerged as one of the top reasons for people to participate in *Pool* (Foley, Yuille et al, 2009). Since *Pool* is not affiliated with a particular ABC program or brand, it also offers flexibility to be used in a variety of different ways for different purposes by different people.

The Future - Pool and ABC Futures

Pool might just be a small and experimental undertaking in the facilitation of collaborative online creative production, but it is an important one, especially for a public service broadcaster. It is beginning to highlight some of the challenges and opportunities facing the ABC from the proliferation of digital technologies. *Pool* shows that even in a relatively 'open' network, the activities of individuals often benefit from a form of managed coordination. This recognition that new modes of 'management' are required to broker cultural production within networked environments raises considerations when imagining network futures.

As outlined, *Pool*'s community of practice is enabled by open content licensing, community managers, moderators, editors, and ABC broadcasters engaged in co-creative production. These elements exist on a spectrum of 'Openness'. They can be considered enablers partly due to their degrees of 'Openness', or their willingness to reconsider issues of control - whether managerial, editorial, production or content related. Network environments like *Pool* also highlight opportunities in the form of new community roles, new internal ABC roles and open data formats. Open data formats and software interoperability has changed the way audiences receive content and the way in which content flows back into new creative processes. One open data format that is having a huge effect on the flow of data in our digital networks, is open Application Programming Interfaces (API). These systems give groups such as content providers and government departments the ability to release their data into the public domain in ways that make it 'reusable' - able to be integrated in to new data sets configured through new interfaces. As the *Pool* initiative is beginning to make clear, programming interfaces are merely a starting point in the facilitation of 'Openness' and collaborative opportunity.

As we begin to consider open network imaginaries, it becomes clear that new systems and structures are required to allow third parties to access, repackage and redistribute the ABC's data and content. These third parties can be thought of as what Brown (2006) calls 'communities of promise', groups that collaborate in the authorship of futures. The new modes of 'authorship' being trialed within the *Pool* community have shown to work successfully, pointing to a need for more investment by the ABC in networked cultures.

Opposition to the allocation of ABC resources to support networked creativity and the release of content into the public domain is anticipated and has emerged through the *Pool* initiative. Web-based operations at the ABC have historically faced many adversaries. The early advocates of ABC Online struggled to secure ongoing support, and campaigned for several years to gain legitimacy beyond the re-versioning of broadcast content. They even overcame several attempts to privatise the ABC Online network (Martin, 2004).

Funding remains a fundamental pressure within the national broadcaster. For those who still live by the old adage 'content is king', initiatives that seek to do anything but support the inhouse production of quality content are considered a digression from the ABC's 'core business'. This group remains a formidable lobby within the ABC. While funding is stable initiatives such as *Pool* may pass below the radar. But the danger is that when things get tight, and they inevitably will, these innovative activities may be sidelined.

We propose that this traditional mode of thought is counterproductive for contemporary PSBs existing in globally networked spaces. We are suggesting that the production of 'quality' content remains within the ABC's remit, and that in the interests of this content, support is delivered to open data and network initiatives.

Support for this claim can be found in educator Maria Anderson's (2010) statement, 'technology is making 'content' irrelevant. It's what you're able to do with the content that's important'. To sharpen her point she cites WolframAlpha, a web-based tool that aggregates data based on factual queries submitted by users. The tool differs from search engines as it searches freely available open data to reveal information relating to the query, as opposed to a list of web-base documents that might contain relevant information. WolframAlpha points to a trend that might well see the notion of a web 'page' superseded by web tools that gather content from different data sources, to displayed in a myriad of different ways. This flips the notion of the content management system on its head, as people are afforded the opportunity to manage and customise the delivery and display of content.

Opposition to 'open data' or 'open network' initiatives is also expected from those who deem them risky ventures. It can be said that the fear rhetoric surrounding 'open' rests in issues of control, which inevitably steers the conversation toward the ABC's editorial policies. These policies are struggling to keep in step with contemporary media ecologies and user expectations, suggesting the ABC's reluctance to relinquish editorial control. However, there are signs the ABC is relaxing its editorial grip as they are now using commercial services like YouTube to display content; they are hosting digital content offshore; and displaying commercial logos such as Twitter and Facebook on web pages and marketing material - practices that were likened to heresy up until quite recently.

Opening ABC archives into the public domain is also a process fraught with tension. There is much optimism surrounding this initiative, yet no one knows what the outcome will be. The institutions are in an optimal position to be experimenting with this process and can provide a critical lens for other organisations to view. There are however major implications emerging from this practice, specifically surrounding editorial decisions and commercial complications.

There are primarily three concerns to the ABC in releasing its archival library. Firstly, the release of ABC material containing previously copyright material - for example an audio track the ABC has specifically acquired the rights to, may infringe upon the rights of the original license holder. Secondly, it is difficult to ascertain the commercial value of archival material and therefore potential financial loss to the commercial arm of the ABC by freely releasing the material. Thirdly, it is necessary to ensuring that the material released does not defame or portray the individuals within the content in a negative way. The challenge for the ABC is to navigate these uncharted waters and to propose new models of archival release which address the interests of all parties. It is not just a model for archival release that is needed, but one that addresses larger implications that are not yet realised. Furthermore, it is not just the ABC facing this dilemma, it is a more broadly based conundrum experienced by other national broadcasters including the BBC.

Conclusion

In the last three decades digital technologies have significantly altered the media landscape in Australia as they have throughout the world. Doomsayers look at this new media landscape in the *digital age of plenty* and cannot quite find a place for public service broadcasters like the ABC. In this paper we have looked both back and forward in articulating an important role that the ABC might play as infrastructure for creative industry innovation. From its earliest days the national broadcaster has been charged with, and taken up enthusiastically, a role in aiding cultural development that has extended beyond its involvement in broadcasting. While cultural values, production, and innovation processes may have changed, the ABC continues to represent an ensemble of valuable resources that might be deployed in supporting Australia's creative industries. In establishing, managing and resourcing *Pool*, an online community of creative practitioners, the ABC has shown how centralised institutions may take a lead role in fostering network innovation in the creative sector.

Acknowledgements

This paper resulted from an interdisciplinary collaborative activity for ECRs and RHD students organized by the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI). We would like to thank the CCI, and, in particular, Dr Ellie Rennie and Associate Professor Jo Tacchi for their feedback and advice.

References

- Agardy, S. (1985). *Young Australians and music*. Melbourne: Australian Broadcasting Tribunal Research Branch.
- Anderson, M. (2010). *Playing to Learn*. Accessed 10 October, 2010, from http://prezi.com/rj_b-gw3u8xl/playing-to-learn/.
- Andrews, L. (1992). ABC's teen network in A. Moran. (Ed). *Stay tuned: The Australian broadcasting reader* (pp.95-98). Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Australian Broadcasting Commission Act 1932.
- Australian Broadcasting Act 1942.
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983.
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) (2010). *Enter the Conversation*. Accessed 10 October, 2010, from <http://www.abc.net.au/corp/enter/>.
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) (2010). *Pool*. Accessed 10 October, 2010, from <http://www.pool.org.au/>
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) (2010). *Triple J Unearthed*. Accessed 10 October, 2010, from <http://www.triplejunearthed.com/>
- Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) (1986). *Australian music on radio*. Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Tribunal.
- Bacon, J. (2009). *The art of community*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly Media.
- Banks, J. (2002). Games as Co-Creators: Enlisting the virtual audience - A report from the net face. In M. Balnaves, T. O'Regan & J. Sternberg (Eds.), *Mobilising the audience* (pp. 188-212). Brisbane: University of Queensland Press.
- Barry, A. (2001). *Political machines: Governing a technological society*. London: The Athlone Press.
- Benkler, Y. (2006). *The wealth of networks : how social production transforms markets and freedom*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Breen, M. (1999). *Rock dogs : Politics and the Australian music industry*. Sydney: Pluto Press.
- Brown, N. (2006). Shifting tenses: from 'regimes of truth' to 'regimes of hope'. Working Paper No. 30. York: University of York.
- Bureau of Transport Communications Economics (BTCE) (1991). *Economic aspects of broadcasting regulation*. Canberra: Bureau of Transport and Communications Economics.
- Burgess, J., & Banks, J. (2010). User generated content and online social networks. In S. Cunningham & G. Turner (Eds.), *The media and communications in Australia* (pp. 295-306). Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.
- Castells, M. (1996). *The rise of the network society*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Commonwealth of Australia (2009). *Powering ideas: An innovation agenda for the 21st century*. Canberra: Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.
- Counihan, M. (1992). 'Giving a chance to a youthful muse': radio, records and the first Australian music quota. *Media International Australia*, 64, 6-16.
- Creative Commons Australia (2010)
- Cunningham, S. (1992). *Framing culture: Criticism and policy in Australia*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Cunningham, S. (2006). Policy. In S. Cunningham & G. Turner (Eds.), *The media and communications in Australia* (pp.43-63). Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.
- Cutler and Co. (2008). *Venturous Australia*. Melbourne: Cutler and Company.
- Davis, G. (1988). *Breaking up the ABC*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Debrett, M. (2010). *Reinventing public service television for the digital future*. Bristol: Intellect.
- Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE) (2008). *ABC and SBS: Towards a digital future*. Canberra: Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.
- Dugdale, J. (1979). *Radio power : a history of 3ZZ Access Radio*. Melbourne: Hyland House.
- Foley, M., Yuille, J., Marmo, C., & Stanton, R. (2009). *Pool user research*. Melbourne: Australasian Cooperative Research Centre for Interactive Design.
- Harding, R. (1979). *Outside interference: The politics of Australian broadcasting*. Melbourne: Sun Books.
- Hartley, J., & Cunningham, S. (2002). Creative industries: From Blue Poles to fat pipes. *Humanities and social sciences futures: papers from the National humanities and social sciences summit*. Canberra: DEETYA.
- Inglis, K. S. (2006). *This is the ABC : Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932-1983*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lave, J., & E. Wenger (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lessig, L. (2008). *Remix: Making art and commerce thrive in the hybrid economy*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Manovich, L. (2008). *Software takes command*. Available online under Creative Commons License at <http://lab.softwarestudies.com/2008/11/softbook.html>.

- Martin, F. (2004). Net worth: The unlikely rise of ABC Online. In G. Goggin (Ed.), *Virtual nation: The internet in Australia* (pp. 193-208). Sydney: UNSW Press.
- Parliamentary Research Service (1994). *Arts policy in Australia: A history of commonwealth involvement in the arts*. Background Paper No 5. Canberra: Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.
- Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia (PCA) (1942). *Report of the Joint Committee on Wireless Broadcasting*. Canberra: Government Printer.
- Rossiter, N. (2006). *Organized networks: Media theory, creative labour, new institutions*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers.
- Scott, M. (2009). Why public broadcasting matters more than ever. *Commonwealth Broadcasting Association lecture*.
- Strahilevitz, L. (2006). *Wealth without markets*. John M Olin Law and Economics Working Paper 35. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Turner, G. (2001). Reshaping Australian institutions: Popular culture, the market and the public sphere. In T. Bennett & D. Carter (Eds.), *Culture in Australia: Policies, publics and programs* (pp. 161-175). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905.